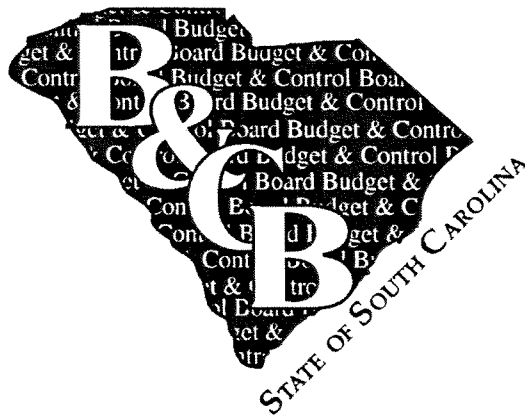


May 30, 2004

# State Government News Summary



**Prepared by the Budget and Control Board  
Office of the Executive Director**



Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## Exodus of officers batters Patrol, SLED

Low pay drains state's 6 key law enforcement agencies

By JOHN MONK  
News Columnist

Budget cuts are crippling South Carolina's six top law enforcement agencies as hundreds of officers quit for better-paying jobs elsewhere.

As state law agencies shrink, South Carolina is becoming an increasingly friendly place for lawbreakers, including speeders, illegal truckers, reckless boaters, wildlife poachers, prisoners and ex-convicts on parole.

"The chances of getting caught for speeding in South Carolina may be among the lowest in the nation, given their low number of troopers," said Tom Crosby, spokesman for AAA Carolinas.

"That's accurate," said Highway Patrol Col. Russell Roark.

Added AAA's Crosby, "When miles driven continue to increase, and law enforcement continues to decrease, it's a recipe for disaster."

The number of S.C. troopers has dropped to 812 today from 970 five years ago. Each year, the patrol loses more than 50 officers it can't replace because state budget woes have forced the Legislature to cut money to all agencies. (It costs \$4 million to train, equip and buy cars for 50 new troopers.)

Many police officers in the state's six top law enforcement agencies are so underpaid that, after three years of layoffs and no raises, they are leaving in droves, agency heads say. The officers are finding better-paying, securer jobs elsewhere — often in local sheriffs' departments or federal law agencies.

The Highway Patrol and the wildlife officers of the Department of Natural Resources — two agencies where the visibility of officers helps keep order on roads and natural areas — are especially hard-hit. But as summer starts — and millions take to the highways, beaches and lakes — the number of these officers is the lowest in years.

Meanwhile, state traffic deaths are 46 ahead of last year, up to 389. And, last year, drownings in rivers and lakes reached a five-year high of 33.

Also, post-9/11, most state law enforcement agencies are being required to take on additional duties with reduced staffs.

"We are maxed out," said State Law Enforcement Division Chief Robert Stewart, adding further cuts would take his 340-agent department "below the basic" minimum for public safety.

However, Stewart said he doesn't expect more cuts.

### LEAVING THE HIGHWAY PATROL

The Highway Patrol's Roark said many departing troopers are seeking better-paying jobs elsewhere. They join federal agencies, including the Secret Service and the Drug Enforcement Agency, he said. Also, local police forces pay more than the Highway Patrol and offer yearly raises.

"We had one (trooper) join the Greenville County Sheriff's Department," Roark said with an air of disbelief.

Last year, he added, four troopers in Horry County left to join a police department in Las Vegas, where they could earn \$45,000 a year. The starting pay for a South Carolina trooper is \$24,586.

The exodus of state police officers to local police jobs is reversing a longtime trend. Once, local police officers joined state law agencies for better pay. Now, it's the other way.

"The state agencies are losing, and we are gaining," said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. In the past year, Lott has hired about a dozen state law officers — including SLED laboratory experts and Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services agents — in the past year.

"I never thought I would see this day," said Lexington County Sheriff James Metts, who has hired 13 law officers from state departments in the past year.

"We're getting the cream of the crop," he said.

Many state police feel insecure working for the state, Metts said. In addition to no pay raises, there is job insecurity, created as state agencies terminate workers to avoid raising taxes.

Richland and Lexington counties offer substantially more in pay, benefits and job security than many state law agencies, Metts and Lott said.

"Most are looking for a more stable job environment and better benefits," said Metts.

In Lexington County, the starting salary for law officers is \$28,906 to \$31,000 a year, depending on education and experience. In Richland County, the average starting pay is \$25,510 to \$28,749.

Most state law officers, except for SLED agents, start at less than \$25,000.

The hardest-hit state law enforcement police are conservation officers, who work for the Department of Natural Resources. The number of DNR officers, who enforce, fish, game and wildlife regulations and boating safety, has dropped 31 percent, to 197, in the past five years.

The DNR officers patrol the state's lakes, rivers and coastline, as well as other natural areas.

"We are doing more with less," said DNR Capt. Harvin Brock.

For example, officers in DNR's Region 3 in the Midlands patrol 12 counties, seven rivers — the Edisto, Saluda, Savannah, Broad, Wateree, Santee, and Congaree — and two lakes, Marion and Murray. On given summer weekends, these waterways have thousands of boaters.

Five years ago, the region had about 60 officers. Now, it has about 40.

An increased officer presence helps ensure people obey boating and outdoor regulations, Brock said. "It's like seeing a patrol car. When you see that, you tighten up a bit."

#### 'YOU CAN'T KEEP CUTTING'

Outsiders who work with state law enforcement agencies worry about state staff cuts.

"It's getting to a dangerous level," said Lott, whose force works with several key state law agencies. "You can't keep cutting and cutting and expect us to have a safer state."

"This is the worst I've ever seen it," said Sixth Circuit Solicitor John Justice, who has been prosecuting criminal cases in Lancaster, Fairfield and Chester counties for 26 years.

Justice said the troopers in his circuit have been cut in half — in both the time they spend on the road and in court — and that means the roads are more dangerous.

"There is a substantial number of people who obey the law only because they see troopers out there," Justice said.

The prosecutor said the Legislature should spend more on law enforcement. "The Legislature has got to make public safety the moral equivalent of national defense," he said.

But attempts to get more money for law enforcement haven't gotten very far in the General Assembly. The state budget has been tight in recent years, and many lawmakers want to cut taxes instead of raising them to pay for law enforcement.

Gov. Mark Sanford, who was not available for an interview, is "concerned" about low law enforcement staffing, particularly in Corrections, a spokesman said Friday. In the wake of recent lean budget years, Sanford is exploring ways to increase efficiency in government, as well as changes to the tax structure that would stimulate the economy and bring in more revenue, the spokesman said.

House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, said raising law enforcement salaries will be one of the House's top priorities next year. He said indications are that the economy is recovering and more money will be available.

But the AAA's Crosby said raising certain taxes offers a way to raise money for better law enforcement. "These are things that we have all come to expect for our tax dollars," he said.

If South Carolina needs more money, it could add a few pennies to its gasoline tax for more troopers, he said. Recent gas hikes have shown people will pay more per gallon for gas, he said.

Each penny added to the gas and diesel fuel tax brings in about \$30 million to the state treasury, according to the S.C. Department of Transportation. Currently, South Carolina has a 16-cent-a-gallon gas tax — one of the nation's lowest.

But state Sen. David Thomas, R-Greenville, a Senate Finance Committee member, said the General Assembly "isn't in the mood" to increase taxes after three years of recession.

Politics aside, the General Assembly's unwillingness to pay more for law enforcement shocks many.

"I never thought I would see law enforcement and public safety being cut because of budget concerns," said Metts, who has been a sheriff for almost 32 years. "There's no price you can put on public safety."



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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## MAKING DO WITH LESS

Law enforcement agencies losing staff include:

### Corrections

- The Department of Corrections has its lowest number of guards in years — 3,714, down from 4,261 five years ago.

At the same time, the number of prisoners in the 29 state prisons is up more than 800, from 21,995 to 22,824.

Corrections director Jon Ozmint said low pay — about \$20,000 a year for beginning corrections officers — and stressful working conditions are responsible for a 33 percent turnover rate among guards each year.

### Probation, Parole and Pardon

- The S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services is down to 434 agents from 601 in 1999.

"We have become a training ground for other law enforcement agencies," said director Sam Glover.

Agents for the state agency must have a college degree and police training. But, with a starting pay of \$22,800 a year, many don't stay long, Glover said.

The state agents oversee victim restitution, monitor ex-convicts and help them re-enter civilian life. Their work can be dangerous, and they carry pistols and wear body armor when serving warrants for probation and parole violations.

They oversee about 31,000 ex-convicts — a caseload of about 71 per agent.

### SLED

- The State Law Enforcement Division has 340 agents, down 33 since 1999.

However, SLED Chief Robert Stewart had 420 agents in 2001, including 20 authorized but vacant slots. "The cold, hard facts are, we are short 80 agents."

### Transport Police

- The State Transport Police has 104 officers, down from 129 in 1999.

"Our workload activities have increased significantly, particularly when you take into consideration the events of 9/11 and current terrorist activity concerns," said Col. Anna Amos, who oversees the department.

Transport police inspect trucks, look for hazardous materials, and ensure they are of legal weight and size. They enforce all federal regulations concerning interstate commercial vehicles.



Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## Sanford's piglet caper may cost him in long run

**Prank miffs legislators, strains already tense relationship**

By VALERIE BAUERLEIN and JENNIFER TALHELM  
Staff Writers

Gov. Mark Sanford's decision to smuggle two piglets into the State House was a spur-of-the-moment reaction to weeks of frustration with legislators and what Sanford saw as their love of pork.

But what started as a last-minute stunt could turn into a defining moment of Sanford's tenure.

It is a symbol not only of his purist philosophy, but also of his inability to operate within the world of state government.

This is critical because Sanford, while popular, is the chief executive of a state in which the governor is weak and the Legislature is strong.

"I'd say that the relationship between the governor and the General Assembly right now would be nonexistent," said Sen. Vincent Sheheen, D-Kershaw, who has been a Sanford ally on fiscal policy.

"He's not accomplishing much of anything."

Legislators said the prank killed any last chance Sanford had of pushing through any of his legislative agenda this week, the last of the five-month legislative session.

So Sanford will be halfway through his four-year term without ticking off any major items on his "to-do" list: There will be no income-tax reduction, no tax credits for private schools, no restructuring of state agencies or the way we elect constitutional officers.

And legislators will come back in January fresh from their own elections, ready to do what they want. They won't be beholden to the wishes of the governor, whose popularity — a whopping 80-plus percent in one recent GOP poll — has been an impetus for them to play nice this year.

"For an administration that started with a great amount of promise, they are in danger of landing with a great thud," said Chip Felkel, a Greenville political consultant who backed Sanford's election.

The memory of Sanford holding a piglet under each arm is indelible, he said.

"The problem is this: Governors are remembered for one or two things," Felkel said. "Carroll Campbell is remembered for bringing BMW to the Upstate. David Beasley, for better or worse, is remembered for his efforts on the (Confederate) flag.

"Does Mark Sanford really want to be remembered for carrying two pigs into the General Assembly? I don't think so."

### SMELLING SWEET

Still, Sanford looked happy Thursday — even with pig feces smeared on his jacket, shoes, and the State House carpet. He was upset that pet projects remained in the budget and that \$16 million of an outstanding deficit would be paid with the sale of property, not cash.

"I'm not antagonizing anybody," Sanford said Thursday, pigs at his feet. "We're making a serious point. I don't find it insulting. This is a real problem for the taxpayers..""

The night before the stunt, he said in an interview that he has to be true to what brought him to the governor's office: a

desire to change politics-as-usual in Columbia.

"The core of who I am is about trying to challenge the status quo, trying to look at different ways of doing things," Sanford said. "You're going to get beat plenty of times in that process. But it is crucial that you constantly point out truth where you see it."

The governor's office alerted all the local TV stations to make sure the pigs were caught on tape.

A day later, Sanford said he would bring the pigs back, to prove a point.

Former legislator Alex Sanders earned the nickname "Master of Ballyhoo" for similar stunts early in his career.

"If you're going to do something like that, it's got to be really be clever," said Sanders, the Democrats' 2002 U.S. Senate nominee. "It can't be contrived. I'm not sure that counted."

Still, Sanders said, there is "less to this than meets the eye" — no great governmental crisis, just the inertia he sees holding South Carolina back.

That, and the unfortunate defecation on the carpet: "In the span of a single legislative session, we've gone from B.S. to P.S."HOUSE IS HURT

The pigs were the rare State House story that became a major topic of conversation on talk and drive-time radio.

One local DJ said Friday morning he thought the stunt was beneath the dignity of the governor. He was beaten back in phone calls by a ratio of 5-1 in favor of Sanford.

House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, was dismayed with the beating the Legislature was taking on the airwaves Friday, and even called in to a hometown talk show to protest.

He told listeners the House had been Sanford's best friend, passing 12 of the 16 items on his "Checklist for Change." That's compared with two in the Senate.

The House also incorporated many of Sanford's priorities in its budget, such as paying back a 2-year-old \$155 million debt, although the two disagreed on how to pay back \$16 million of it.

Wilkins said the Republican-led House has tried to work with its Republican governor, and had welcomed the change after four years of battling Democratic Gov. Jim Hodges.

"But, with Governor Hodges being a Democrat, you knew where the battle lines were," Wilkins said. "It was clear cut: These are my agenda items, these are yours."

"It's really been a whole different ball game."

That's because Sanford ran as an outsider and is trying to govern as one, Wilkins said.

"We continue to move forward and pass the agenda, and yet the governor continues to run against the Legislature," Wilkins said. "He continues to use us as a whipping boy, even when we've passed the legislation he's asked us to."

"The question becomes, how long can he continue to do this, and how long can the House continue to pass his legislation?"

Sen. David Thomas, R-Greenville, has pushed Sanford's plans, but he said Sanford's approach feels schizophrenic to legislators.

One day he likes you, "and the next day he's having a news conference against you. He says he was talking to you about item A and the news conference was about item B.

"It's as if he wants us to live in two worlds. That doesn't work legislatively. It might build his poll numbers. It might even be, from his perspective, intellectually honest. But he can't get the agenda items he wants because the relationship we have has broken down."

## A WIN AND A LOSS

Sanford's prank can be seen as a win in the world of public opinion and still a loss in politics, said Charles Bierbauer, dean of USC's College of Mass Communications and Information Studies and a former CNN White House correspondent.

It shows that a political event resonates on many different levels, depending on how much, or how little, you care.

"If you don't care very much, it's kind of funny," Bierbauer said. "If you're here and you've been following the whole budget context, you've got a different take."

In this case, the governor went for a sight gag, Bierbauer said.

"The speaker was offended, the rug was stained, and the relationship is now strained," he said. "Was it worth it? Not if the governor's in this for the long haul."

Some legislators, particularly Democrats, saw the gag as funny, especially after the governor and House clashed over Sanford's 106 budget vetoes.

"It's a hilarious action on the part of the governor that kind of defuses the tension that has been in this place," said Rep. Joe Neal, D-Richland.

That's the reaction Sanford was hoping for, but what if it becomes his legacy?

"The governor would hope that he would be remembered for the many times he has and will continue to stick up for the taxpayers of South Carolina," spokesman Will Folks said.

"It was certainly something that symbolized his efforts to do that. He was having fun, too."

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## Hot items on Sanford's agenda may be iced

Posted Sunday, May 30, 2004 - 12:27 am

By Jim Davenport  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA — When the 2004 Statehouse session ends in a few days, legislators will go home to face voters and leave Gov. Mark Sanford to stare at empty Senate desks where much of his agenda was left undone.

Sanford's plans to restructure government, cut income taxes, limit lawsuits and reform health care and education aren't the only bills expected to die this week.

Dozens of Senate bills made it over to the House but were never brought up for discussion or sent to the floor for debate, including changes in child custody, pardon and identity fraud laws; but even more House bills are marooned in the Senate.

As Thursday's mandatory adjournment nears, legislators and the governor are expected to point at each other as they lay blame for what didn't get done.

Sanford is aware time is short, noting that his staff worked long hours last week to justify his vetoes.

"We're in a crunch time," he said. "I think perhaps the lights need to stay on a little bit longer so that we can forge through."

However, Sanford doesn't foresee calling the Legislature into a special session to finish work on his agenda or other issues. "Calling back ... basically suggests crisis. I don't think we're at crisis," he said.

The Republican governor's stunt last Thursday — bringing two squirming piglets to the doors of the House chamber to call attention to pork that remained in the state budget

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— prompted nearly an hour of reaction from the Senate that delayed taking up budget vetoes.

A day earlier, the House raced through 106 budget vetoes, sustaining just one of them and drawing rebukes from Sanford for a "reckless" lack of consideration.

House Ways and Means Chairman Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, said that many vetoes threatened to gum up the works "when there are much more important issues that we need to be talking about."

House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, said the lower chamber has accomplished much during the two-year assembly: clarifying that employee handbooks aren't work contracts; a lawsuit reform bill; making it easier to establish charter schools; getting a bill to Sanford's desk that changes how regulations are imposed on small businesses; and passing Sanford's income tax reduction plan.

In all, the House has passed 13 of Sanford's top agenda items; just one of those has cleared the Senate.

"I'll be disappointed if many of the bills passed by the House passed earlier in the session were not dealt with by the Senate," Wilkins said.

For the most part, Sanford's priorities faced little resistance in the House, but in the Senate there's been virtually no progress.

To get around that, the House began passing some of Sanford's agenda items and other bills a second time by attaching them to bills that had cleared the Senate so they would leap to the top of the Senate's clogged calendar.

"We keep having to pass bills twice," Wilkins said.

Senators spent Tuesday and Wednesday mired in a debate over Sanford's plans to cut the state's income tax and weren't looking forward to dealing with budget vetoes.

A sense of resignation had set in.

While there were plenty of important bills to take up, "the world won't end if we don't do anything else," said Senate Majority Leader Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence.

The little piggies that went to the Statehouse with Sanford did little to win him much support, either.

Sen. David Thomas, R-Fountain Inn, had led the fight for Sanford's income tax plan but said it appeared to be dead after Sanford couldn't convince Democrats to get the issue to a vote.

The vetoes and the pig incident show how differently Sanford works with legislators than his predecessors, who used well-defined, targeted vetoes and built support to sustain them, Thomas said.

With Sanford, its pigs and polls.

With his vetoes bashed in the House, the governor cast himself as standing up "to these bad guys and brings pigs into the chamber," Thomas said. "The problem with that is it works for the polling numbers, but it doesn't accomplish the purpose" of "winning the day on his major issues."



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## Public support for Sanford's pig stunt stumps legislators

Published Sunday, May 30th, 2004

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - Gov. Mark Sanford's public image doesn't appear to be taking a beating from last week's pig stunt.

The governor hauled a pair squirming pigs under his arms to the door of the House chambers to call attention to pork he says remains in the state's budget and how the Legislature paid off part of a two-year-old, \$155 million deficit.

When a Columbia DJ said the stunt was beneath the governor's dignity, callers ran about 5-to-1 in Sanford's favor. Approval for Sanford ran about the same in notes written to a Columbia television station and a Charleston newspaper.

House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, called a hometown talk show to protest.

Wilkins says the House has done a great deal for Sanford, passing 12 of 16 items on the governor's "Checklist for Change" and embraced many of his priorities in the budget.

"We continue to move forward and pass the agenda, and yet the governor continues to run against the Legislature," Wilkins said. "He continues to use us as a whipping boy, even when we've passed the legislation he's asked us to."

For his part, Sanford says the stunt wasn't insulting. "We're making a serious point," he said. "This is a real problem for the taxpayers."

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Posted on May 30, 2004

## GOP plans rally for Sanford

By From staff reports

The Spartanburg County Republican Party will stage a rally for Gov. Mark Sanford at 8 p.m. Wednesday at the University of South Carolina Spartanburg's Humanities and Performing Arts Center.

The rally will follow a debate by GOP candidates for the U.S.

House of Representatives. It will be part of the county GOP's quarterly executive committee meeting.

Rick Beltram, chairman of the Spartanburg County Republican Party, said the public is invited to the rally. Beltram can be reached for details at 590-7723.

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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## Reader survey says job creation is the critical issue in S.C.

By AARON GOULD SHEININ  
Staff Writer

Economic concerns, not the war in Iraq or gay marriage, are the top issues in the 2004 U.S. Senate race in South Carolina, according to those responding to a survey by The State newspaper.

More than 1,300 readers answered the survey either on The State's Web site, thestate.com, or by clipping and mailing a questionnaire from the newspaper. The results, which are unscientific, support and contradict positions being raised by the six Republican candidates and the presumptive Democratic nominee in the June 8 primary.

According to readers:

- The most important issue in the campaign is creating new, higher paying jobs in South Carolina.
- Issues two through four are making America safer from terrorist threats; reducing the federal budget deficit; and ensuring U.S. businesses and workers do not face unfair foreign competition.
- The least important issue is legalizing gay marriage. Those responding to the survey also said, on average, that passing a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage was far down the list of top issues. It ranked 16th out of 20 issues.

The campaigns of the six Republicans and Democrat Inez Tenenbaum all have stressed the need of boosting the economy, although they disagree on what should be done.

But the candidates should be forewarned: The economy is the issue that matters, said Kathy Condom of Irmo, a Republican who is office manager of the RE/MAX realty firm on Lake Murray Boulevard.

"I've decided I'm going to vote on the economy, not anything else," said Condom, also a member of Irmo Town Council. "I've lost so much money. It's purely personal."

Condom has not decided for whom she will vote. But, she said, candidates should not tout the Bush tax cut in an effort to get her vote.

She said she asked everyone who came in her office in April "if they felt the tax cut."

"Only one person said they did," said Condom, 53. "The other 20-odd said, 'What tax cut?'"

"I didn't notice it. I owed money."

On average, those responding to the survey said making permanent the Bush tax cut was in the second tier of issues important to them.

(Of those responding, 420 rated making the cuts permanent of the greatest importance, a 10; 247 said it was of the least importance, rating a one.)

Several candidates, especially Republicans, have made gay marriage an issue in the campaign. In debates and in advertisements, their campaigns all boast that they'd support a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. Tenenbaum, too, has said she would support such an amendment.

But Republican Glen Ross of Columbia finds that foolish.

"The social issues are really low on my priority list," said Ross, 46, adding he opposes gay marriage. "I don't think they need to be constitutional amendments. It weakens the Constitution."

Condom, of Irmo, agreed. "I think they (the candidates) think it's more controversial and more a priority than the electorate does."

Democrat Robin Biro of Columbia said the candidates all are vying for the conservative vote.

"It's not going to be important to many people other than gay and lesbian people, like myself," said Biro, a commercial real-estate appraiser. "I see the candidates actually identifying their willingness to alienate gay voters. That's the only thing making it an issue for me in the Senate race."

But those who believe moral issues are not important are mistaken, said Richard Quinn of Columbia, one of the state's top political consultants. Quinn's firm is working with Republican David Beasley in the primary.

"I know they are (important) because we poll," Quinn said.

Issues like prayer in school, abortion, gay marriage, and keeping God in the Pledge of Allegiance — the subject of a Beasley commercial — "rank real high" among Republican primary voters, Quinn said.

That has always been true, said Francis Marion University political scientist Neal Thigpen. In a Republican primary, "the Christian right can be counted on to cast about maybe a third of the votes," Thigpen said.

The subject of a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage ranked of the highest importance to 390 of those responding to the survey. More respondents — 590 — said it was of the least importance. (The remainder were scattered.)

Reach Gould Sheinin at (803) 771-8658 or [asheinin@thestate.com](mailto:asheinin@thestate.com).



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## Upstate holds upper hand in election clout

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By Dan Hoover

STAFF WRITER

[dhooover@greenvillenews.com](mailto:dhooover@greenvillenews.com)

Grace Hargis is an English teacher who goes over every Greenville County Republican Party platform to purge them of grammatical errors.

A self-described "wordsmith," the Bob Jones University instructor pairs that with an appreciation "for our form of government."

It's not surprising, then, that someone with such exactitude toward grammar and politics hasn't missed a GOP primary since the 1960s, a time when a Republican primary was rare enough to be an event.

Hargis, 65, may be alone in proofreading the platform, but when it comes to voting in Republican primaries, she has plenty of company in South Carolina's Upstate.

In sheer turnout, Greenville, Anderson, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg counties eclipse every other region of the state.

"It makes the difference," Luke Byars, executive director of the state GOP, said of the Upstate's outsize influence on his party's primary elections.

"It's the biggest voting bloc in the state for us. I don't think a candidate can win a Republican primary — and, especially, a runoff — if they can't win the Upstate."

Over the past 10 major statewide



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Republican primary elections, from Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential blowout of George H. W. Bush and John Connally to Mark Sanford's 2002 gubernatorial runoff victory, the Upstate has averaged 29.3 percent of the votes.

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An analysis of State Election Commission reports by *The Greenville News* showed that the six counties ranged from 24.2 percent for the 1994 gubernatorial runoff to 34.1 percent in 2002's six-way gubernatorial primary.

The counties have 26 percent of South Carolina's 4 million residents.

Greenville, with 9 percent of the state's population, can vote up to 14 percent of the statewide total.

"It's pivotal, simply because of the numbers," said Warren Mowry, a former Greenville County Republican chairman.

The June 8 GOP primary for the U.S. Senate involves six candidates, one from the Upstate, one from the Pee Dee and four from the coast:

U.S. Rep. Jim DeMint of Greenville, former Gov. David Beasley of Society Hill, former Attorney General Charlie Condon of Sullivans Island, Charleston developer Thomas Ravenel, Myrtle Beach Mayor Mark McBride and Bluffton businesswoman Orly Benny Davis.

Condon and political newcomer Ravenel are locked in a struggle with DeMint for a slot in the almost certain June 22 runoff primary with Beasley, the candidate with perhaps the highest name recognition.

How the Upstate and Lowcountry vote splits may determine the shape of the runoff.

Ed McMullen, president of the South Carolina Policy Council, a conservative think tank, sees the Upstate's heavy vote as a boost for DeMint, because he's local, and Beasley, because of his ties to the Christian right and textile interests.

"There's so much at work in this primary, the provinciality of the Lowcountry wanting one of their own, then you have a conservative base in the Upstate which is a third of the primary vote," McMullen said.

Regional voting can cut more than one way.

"In the Lowcountry, it's anyone but the Upstate. One Upstate senator, OK," McMullen said. "Two? It ain't going to happen."

Beasley not done well in the Lowcountry in the past, but DeMint has geography working against him.

Some voters in Charleston and its neighboring Lowcountry counties may not look too kindly on the possibility of a second Upstate candidate — DeMint — joining Sen. Lindsey Graham, who lives in Seneca, just 40 miles from Greenville.

But they have four candidates from their coastal region on the ballot, a potential for fragmentation.

Jack Bass, College of Charleston political scientist, said, "My impression is, the Lowcountry is split" between Ravenel and Condon.

Recent polls have shown Condon slipping into fourth place statewide as Ravenel moved into



third behind DeMint.

*Dan Hoover covers politics and can be reached at 298-4883.*

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HILTON HEAD ISLAND - BLUEFETON S.C.

Southern Beaufort County's News & Information Source

## Candidates wrap up campaigns for state House seat

### Republicans stress education as priority

BY ASHLEY FLETCHER, *The Island Packet*

Other stories by Ashley Fletcher

Published Sunday, May 30th, 2004

Across the state, Republican Party politics have been heating up over a bitter budget debate and a six-way primary race for the U.S. Senate.

But on Hilton Head Island, a much quieter GOP contest is drawing to a close.

Beaufort County Councilwoman Starletta Hairston and former North Carolina lawmaker Richard Chalk are competing in a low-key Republican primary contest for S.C. House District 123 that, for all purposes, is the House race itself. No Democrats have filed for the seat.



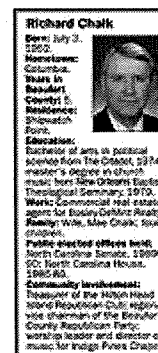
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Voters will choose a new representative in the June 8 primary election.

Hairston and Chalk are vying to succeed Rep. JoAnne Gilham, R-Hilton Head, who is honoring a term-limits pledge by stepping down after three terms.

Chalk, a commercial real estate agent, says his experience in the North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives would give him a head start as a freshman lawmaker since he already knows how a state legislature operates. While identifying issues he would like to influence, such as public education, tort reform, government restructuring and natural resources. Chalk prefers not to target too many specific changes he would make if elected.

"As a first-term legislator, you're not going to have much influence," he said. "The things you're interested in and want to make a difference in are more important than 'What are you going to do?' "



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Hairston, a former airline flight attendant who was elected to County Council in 2002, says she is running on her record of community service. She has outlined a three-plank platform of improving public education, expanding economic development and reforming the state's tax structure.

But her goals also are broad, she said, because she would have to study the issues more closely before proposing solutions.

Both candidates say improving public education would be a top focus if elected.

Hairston is concerned about the achievement gap between minority students and white students.

"I would like to look at schools with predominantly African-American student bodies and look at the ones that are succeeding and the ones that are not," she said.

Studying what makes some minority schools succeed could highlight steps other schools should take to improve.

A similar study of charter schools -- schools that, if approved, receive public tax dollars but are freed from some of the state's education regulations -- could shed light on ways to improve the public school system, Hairston said.

"If we believe that charter schools are a good option, then maybe we can better our public schools if we relax some of the regulations," she said.

Chalk shares Hairston's thoughts on charter schools.

"The very idea of doing charter schools was allowing groups within communities not to have all the rules and regulations of schools in the public school system," he said. "Through these schools we may find some things that improve the public school system."

Chalk is concerned about the high school dropout rate in Beaufort County and statewide. But that problem might be grounded more in social problems than education policy, he said.

As a lawmaker, Chalk would be the catalyst that brings the community together to talk about underlying problems, such as hurdles facing disadvantaged students, he said. If state laws are working more as impediments than solutions, he would work to change them.

"I think that we need to have discussions across racial and socio-economic lines without getting offended," he said.

Chalk also wants to make grade-level advancement tied more closely to academic achievement. The problem of "social promotion" has not been fixed, he said.

On other issues, Chalk would make sure state laws do not threaten natural resources important to Beaufort County, he said. If the legislature does not pass tort reform limiting punitive damages to \$200,000 or \$250,000 this year, he would push for the change.

Chalk also would work to pass Gov. Mark Sanford's proposals for government restructuring if they are not adopted in the next few weeks. In particular, he supports Sanford's proposal to put the governor and lieutenant governor on the same election ticket and change the state education superintendent from an elected office to a governor appointee.

Hairston wants to look at economic incentives the state can offer to attract industries to the state. She hopes to work with the Greater Beaufort-Hilton Head Economic Partnership to identify potential incentives.

She also supports some type of tax reform, such as capping property value increases, eliminating the income tax and raising the gasoline tax.

Chalk said any change to the tax system should be fair to all taxpayers. And if one tax is reduced, the state must find revenue to replace it.

"As a general rule, Republicans don't like taxes," he said. "But realistically, you have to pay for the services that government has to take care of."

Contact Ashley Fletcher at 706-8144 or [afletcher@islandpacket.com](mailto:afletcher@islandpacket.com).

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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## Five-day forecasts scare tourists

Coastal tourism officials stress inaccuracy of earlier hurricane predictions

By JOEY HOLLEMAN  
Staff Writer

### Five-day forecasts scare tourists

Hurricane forecasters call it "the cone of uncertainty," but coastal tourism officials know some people see it as "the cone of get-the-heck-out-of-here."

The difference translates into millions of tourism dollars lost. That's why both tourism officials and government hurricane forecasters want to stress the inherent inaccuracies of the five-day forecast tracks that debuted last year.

Their message: Don't run for the hills just because that cone touches the South Carolina coast.

"With so much reliance on technology today, people think we do a better job of forecasting than we really do," said Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center.

He recommends that coastal residents and visitors simply pay more attention to weather reports and put together an evacuation plan when the five-day cone nears their area. If they're lucky, they won't have to use those plans.

Tourism officials protested the change from the three- to five-day forecast last year. They still don't think an extra 48 hours' notice is necessary or even effective, but they don't expect it to change.

"You can't put the toothpaste back in the tube," said Gary Loftus, director of the Coastal Federal Center for Economic Development at Coastal Carolina University.

Five days before a hurricane is expected to affect the coast, the cone showing its possible path turns up on television screens and computer monitors. The center is where forecasters think the storm is most likely to hit. The outer edges of the cone mark the margin of error — the storm could affect that area, but it might not.

Statistically, a storm forecast on Tuesday to hit Charleston on Saturday actually could hit anywhere from Daytona Beach to Cape Hatteras.

Until last year, the official forecast stretched only three days in advance. Last year, the National Hurricane Center went to a five-day forecast and drew the wrath of tourism officials.

"The moment you start projecting possible hurricane paths, you can't help but scare people away," said Brad Dean, chief executive officer of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. "We want to educate the (television station) meteorologists about the inaccuracies of the forecasts. But they're not going to go on TV and say, 'My forecast is inherently going to be wrong.'"

Mayfield said he has encouraged television meteorologists to do just that. Rather than brag about cutting the five-day margin of error to 257 miles last year, the National Hurricane Center stresses that the margin was much worse in experimental five-day forecasts in 2001 and 2002. On that basis, the five-day cone will stretch nearly 700 miles wide this year.

Sun-burned golfers from Ohio don't need to leave the Grand Strand or stay home on the basis of the five-day forecast, tourism officials said. Mayfield agreed.

"I understand this is a sensitive topic," Mayfield said. "(The five-day forecast) is not meant to be a stand-alone tool. It's a planning tool. A lot of people need more than three days, the Navy, offshore oil platforms, NASA."

## FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

The southern edge of the five-day forecast cone for Hurricane Isabel covered the Grand Strand last September, but the storm maintained its expected course and hit in the northern Outer Banks.

So the third week of September 2003 proved to be breezy but not dangerous in Myrtle Beach. Yet the area's hotel and vacation rental revenue dropped 11 percent for that week compared to 2002, Loftus said.

Tourism officials blame the five-day forecast.

The National Hurricane Center made the change to five days because forecasters felt technological advances were making their projected paths more accurate, and the evidence from the first year indicates they were right. The 257-mile margin of error was as accurate as the three-day forecasts 15 years ago.

Jim Gandy of WLTX in Columbia said many TV meteorologists try to explain how inexact five-day forecasts can be, as he does. But viewers don't always understand.

"That will always be a battle," he said. "It doesn't make any difference how you say it or how many times you say it, there's going to be somebody who doesn't get it."

One problem is that people in the Midwest or Northeast planning trips to the South Carolina coast aren't savvy about hurricane forecasts, Loftus said.

"As long as TV meteorologists in Cleveland or Pittsburgh or Nashville give good information and explain what the forecast means, it's fine," he said. "But they don't."

Loftus also noted that inaccuracies of five-day forecasts could create a "cry wolf" effect. Every time the Grand Strand is in a five-day forecast swath but isn't hit by a hurricane, people will have a little less faith in the forecast the next time.

Mayfield has the same fear, not only about five-day forecasts but also about hurricanes in general.

"The United States of America is more vulnerable to hurricanes today than every before," he said, noting the number of new hotels and residences built on the coast in recent years. "We've had more hurricanes than ever during a nine-year period, 32 major hurricanes. Based on the long-term averages, we should have had 10 of those hit the U.S. coast, but only three (major hurricanes) have hit — Opal, Fran and Brett.

"Maybe we need a reminder of what a major hurricane can do."

Reach Holleman at (803) 771-8366 or [jholleman@thestate.com](mailto:jholleman@thestate.com).



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## Supporters hope to muster minibottle referendum vote in House

Published Sunday, May 30th, 2004

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - Supporters of a referendum that would allow voters to decide the fate of minibottles in November hope to muster enough votes to pass it in the House this week.

The bill will die when legislators go home Thursday unless two-thirds of House members support it.

The bill won second reading last week but didn't get the 83 votes it needed. The House passed a nearly identical bill in January with a 90-10 vote. The bill has cleared the Senate.

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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## S.C. native aids GOP on small screen

**Scott Howell's clients include President Bush, other high-profile candidates**

**By AARON GOULD SHEININ**  
Staff Writer

Scott Howell is on the short list of the nation's top political consultants, a position that has turned the Bennettsville native into a Republican media darling.

Howell, 45, has produced campaign ads for top Republicans around the country, including several this year for President Bush's re-election campaign.

But he hasn't forgotten his roots. Howell also has produced ads for U.S. Rep. Jim DeMint's Senate campaign in South Carolina.

"I'm real fortunate in my career," Howell said in an interview from his Dallas office. "I can kind of pick and choose, and get to at least talk to the top candidates now. I pinch myself every day."

Getting on that short list is simple, but not easy. It's done by producing ads that produce winning candidates. Fortunately for him, Howell is on a winning streak.

In recent years he has done ads for U.S. Sens. Norm Coleman, R-Minn., Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., and Jim Talent, R-Mo.

This year, Howell is in charge of advertising for John Thune, the Republican challenger to Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, R-S.D. Knocking off Daschle is a GOP dream.

Howell also has been asked to work for the Bush-Cheney team. Howell is not the only media consultant the campaign has hired, but he produced the first ads of the president's re-election bid.

"It's a phenomenal privilege to be tapped to do this," Howell said. "An incumbent president can have anybody they want. I'm just thrilled to be a part of it."

One of the first ads Howell made for Bush this year featured images of the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York City. The controversial ad, a powerful reminder of that day, led some to criticize the president's campaign, saying it was trying to use terrorist attacks for political gain.

It was not the first time a Howell-produced campaign has been criticized.

In the 2002 U.S. Senate race in Georgia, Chambliss' campaign ran an ad that featured incumbent Democrat Max Cleland's face transforming into the face of Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden.

The ad painted Cleland — a Vietnam War veteran who lost three limbs in battle — as weak on defense. Cleland and other political observers have said the ad cost Cleland the election.

Howell has said another media consultant produced that particular ad. However, Howell was the Chambliss campaign's media manager, making him responsible for the ad, said Robert Gibbs, a former press secretary to U.S. Sen. Fritz Hollings, D-S.C.

"I think regardless of what (Howell) says, his reputation, at least in the near term, is going to be that of someone who took part in what will go down as one of the meanest ads in political history," Gibbs said.

However, Gibbs has a vested interest in blaming Howell for what many have called an incendiary, unfair campaign. Gibbs is spokesman for Barack Obama, a Democrat running for the U.S. Senate in Illinois. Obama's opponent is Republican

Jack Ryan, who recently hired Howell's firm.

#### ATWATER PROTEGE

If Howell has a tough streak, it may be a product of his political upbringing. He worked for the legendary Lee Atwater, another S.C. native who made the political big time. Atwater was hailed as one of the most ruthless, yet creative, political operatives of his generation.

Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee in the 1980s, was a close adviser to presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. He died in 1991.

Howell later worked for Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's top political adviser and another savvy veteran known for being politically tough as nails.

"That's the guy that's got nerves of steel," Howell said.

#### S.C. TIES

The soft-spoken Howell remembers fondly his days in South Carolina.

He's done work here, too. In the 2002 gubernatorial campaign, Howell produced an ad for the Republican Party that accused incumbent Democratic Gov. Jim Hodges of improperly using money meant to help disadvantaged children.

The ad was powerful and pointed.

However, the turning point in Howell's political career came in 1984, when he ran for the S.C. House and lost to Democrat Tim Rogers.

"Eighty-four was the fun race," Howell said. "I walked through three pairs of dress slacks. I had this wet-behind-the-ears look. I still can't grow any facial hair."

In those early days, Howell grew to know and admire Moffatt Burris of Columbia, a former state lawmaker. Burris is a World II veteran and "a huge inspiration to me," Howell said. "I can't quantify what he's done as a role model. He basically told Lee (Atwater), 'I don't care what you do, you need to hire this boy and take care of him.'"

Howell and S.C. Republican Party director Luke Byars were fraternity brothers in Pi Kappa Alpha at USC. Byars remembers Howell's race against Rogers.

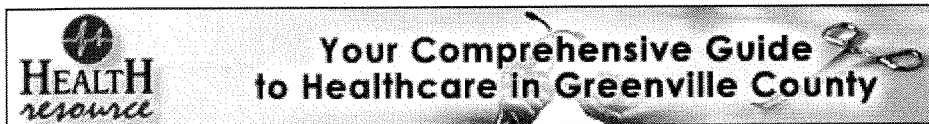
"Thank goodness he lost," Byars said. "He discovered what he was really good at, and it wasn't being a candidate."

Howell has an ability "to tell it like it is," Byars said. "And you have got to have that in politics. You have got to be able to cut through it."

As for Howell, working with an incumbent president is a treat, but his ultimate goal is still unfulfilled.

"My ultimate goal is to take my horse and take my candidate to the White House," Howell said. "I'd like to help somebody from thought to finish make it."

Reach Gould Sheinin at (803) 771-8658 or [asheinin@thestate.com](mailto:asheinin@thestate.com).



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The Greenville News

## Bill would shut county out of hospital issues

Posted Sunday, May 30, 2004 - 12:27 am

By Tim Smith  
CAPITAL BUREAU  
[tcsmith@greenvillenews.com](mailto:tcsmith@greenvillenews.com)

COLUMBIA — Eight years after Greenville County voters rejected the idea of a hospital merger, lawmakers have passed a bill to prevent the County Council from taking another hospital issue to the ballot box.

The legislation would prohibit the council from asking voters' advice on any hospital matter, something it did in 1996 over the proposed merger.

Sponsors of the bill said they don't think it's appropriate for the County Council to be involved in hospital issues since the council does not appoint any of the hospital's trustees.

The House has given final approval to the bill. It now goes to Gov. Mark Sanford for final approval.

Greenville County residents had mixed opinions about the legislation.

Ricky Evans, 40, of Greenville, said a "good choice" is to let the public vote on hospital system referendums.

"The hospital is for everybody," he said. "I think it should be left up to the voters."

Tony Gonzalez, 38, of Simpsonville, said he's concerned about the bill's ripple effect on patients. He wants legislators to research the issue, rather than rush a vote.

"Whatever is best for the people should be done," he said.

But David Noyes, 33, of Greenville, said the system creates "a layer of interference at the county level that doesn't apply anymore."

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"I guess I'm not opposed to the state (Legislature) getting the county out of it," he said.

The legislation caught council members by surprise.

County Councilman Mark Kingsbury, who supported the 1996 referendum, said he thinks it's "shameful" for lawmakers to pass such legislation.

"This is anti-American," he said. "We live in a democracy. We should never shut out the voters giving their input."

County Council Chairman Phyllis Henderson said she didn't know enough about the legislation to discuss it. "I really don't have an opinion on that," she said.

The County Council last placed the issue before voters in November 1996, when a group opposed to the proposed merger of the Greenville Hospital System with a public hospital in Spartanburg and a private hospital in Anderson argued that such a merger required approval by voters.

Both sides disagreed over whether the vote was binding. Voters rejected the merger by a 3-1 margin. Hospital trustees abandoned the merger plan afterward.

Robyn Zimmerman, a spokeswoman for the hospital system, said hospital officials have talked to lawmakers in recent years about allowing only the city or lawmakers to call for a vote. She said the hospital doesn't oppose the idea of a referendum.

"We have always believed that a referendum provides the public with a voice, which we, of course, support," she said. "This piece of legislation simply states that the Greenville City Council and the legislative delegation who elect the GHS Board of Trustees are the public entities who should make the decision regarding a referendum."

Rep. Lewis Vaughn, a Greer Republican, and the bill's chief sponsor, said he has wanted to "fix" the issue ever since the 1996 referendum.

"It upset a lot of people," Vaughn said. "It caused a lot of discord. The legislative delegation was not going to let them merge those hospitals. The Greenville County Council just stirred up some dust. So we fixed that so they couldn't do that anymore."

Sen. Verne Smith, a Greer Republican, said the city and the county's legislative delegation founded the hospital and appoint its board members.

"This just puts responsibility on the city and the delegation," he said. "That cleaned it up a little bit to keep from having frustrations between the bodies. I think that will help bring peace."

Kingsbury said neither the hospital nor any other elected official should fear giving people a voice in how the system is run.

"If the hospital system isn't going to do anything that the voters would be unhappy with, there's no reason for this legislation," he said. "The County Council is the one who put this issue on the ballot in 1996. The Legislature had a chance to do it and didn't. What makes us think they would do it now?"

Rep. Bob Leach, a Greenville Republican and another sponsor of the bill, called the 1996 referendum a "nuisance."

"We tried to make sure that these nuisance referendums wouldn't be coming up in the future," he said.

Sen. Mike Fair, a Greenville Republican, called the bill "reasonable," saying local governing bodies and lawmakers usually agree on hospital issues.

The bill also would impact the Medical University of South Carolina, lawmakers said, the only other hospital system in the state controlled in part by lawmakers or those outside a local body.

The legislation states that any hospital referendum can only be called by the hospital's governing bodies.

The Greenville Hospital system operates 17 facilities at five locations and employs about 7,500 people, Zimmerman said.

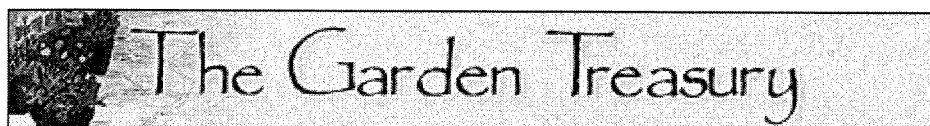
*Staff writer Paul Alongi contributed to this story.*



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## Legislative Digest: The week's news from the Statehouse

Posted Sunday, May 30, 2004 - 12:27 am

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By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 21st week of the legislative session:

**State budget:** The state's \$5.5 billion budget became law after the Senate overrode all but six of Gov. Mark Sanford's 106 vetoes. With the House sustaining one veto, the General Assembly agreed with the governor on just seven of his 106 vetoes.

Sanford won mostly minor fights in the spending plan, which pays off a \$155 million deficit from two years ago and gives state workers a 3 percent, across-the-board raise, their first in two years. The budget takes effect July 1.

**Pig protest:** Gov. Mark Sanford carried two squealing piglets under his arms up the steps to the lobby outside the House and Senate to decry what he saw as pork in the budget. Most lawmakers blasted it as a stunt and some said it would make the butt of jokes nationally.

**Minibottles:** South Carolinians might not get the chance to vote on the state's minibottle requirement after all. Members of the House took two votes on the proposal, both coming up shy of the two-thirds necessary for approval. Rep. Alan Clemmons, R-Myrtle Beach, says he's hopeful the bill can get the two-thirds vote eventually.

**Income tax:** Hopes are dim for Gov. Mark Sanford's plans to cut the state's top income tax rate. Senate Republicans failed to muster the votes needed to wrap up debate on the bill.

Republicans needed 28 votes to shut down Democrats who threatened to talk Sanford's centerpiece bill to death. But they could never get more than 25 in three votes. The bill can still be debated in the session's last three days.

**Judicial elections:** In a session where black lawmakers have increasingly complained about the lack of diversity in South Carolina's courts, the General Assembly elected two

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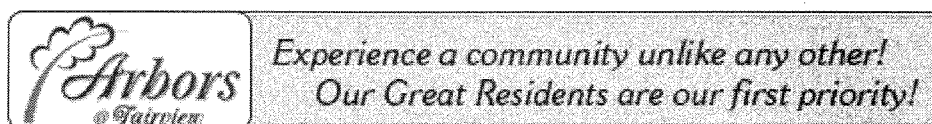
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white men to seats in the state's second highest court. Chester County Circuit Court Judge Paul Short and Richland County Family Court Judge Bruce Williams were elected.

**Gay marriage ban:** The Senate gave final approval to a bill that would ban recognition of gay marriages in South Carolina, but because of a procedural error, the vote changed.

**Senate chaplain:** The Senate celebrated the Rev. George Meetze's 95th birthday. The retired Lutheran pastor has spent the past 54 years starting each Senate session with a verse and a prayer.

Meetze is known for prayers that ask people to work together in and out of the Legislature.

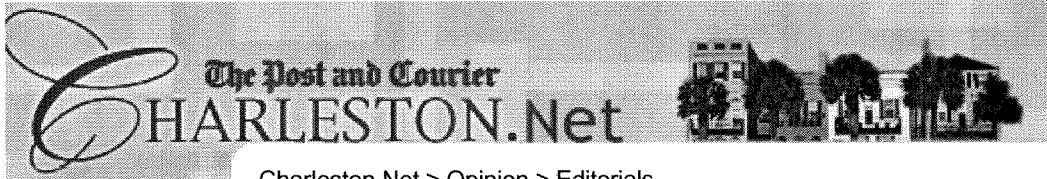


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*Story last updated at 7:10 a.m. Sunday, May 30, 2004*

## Costly public school programs deserve further state scrutiny

A recent audit of the Department of Education points out areas where immediate savings can be achieved, in the cost of travel, catering, cell phones and postage. But the more significant findings point to the growing cost of a program aimed at teacher excellence, and call into question the results of state intervention at failing schools. Each deserves the further scrutiny of educators and lawmakers.

The National Board Certification Program is costing the state \$20.7 million a year, and given the pace of enrollment will soon reach \$50 million in extra state expenses. South Carolina pays teachers who achieve certification an extra \$7,500 a year, the highest rate in the nation. Local districts frequently supplement their salaries as well.

The Legislative Audit Council's findings question whether the certification program is reaping the results that its advocates claim. It urges greater accountability for those enrolled in the program, and in determining if national certification produces benefits in the classroom.

"While it is important to find ways to reward effective teachers, the state should consider whether this is the most appropriate method," the audit concluded. "The state has not ensured that there are adequate controls over a system which requires it to pay millions of dollars."

The LAC report raises further accountability questions, with mixed academic results following state intervention in academically troubled schools. The audit found that South Carolina has spent more than \$46 million on that program but "has not yet implemented adequate measures that can be used to determine program results."

In their response, education officials say not enough time has

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passed to reach dependable conclusions, and the LAC acknowledges as much. But audit findings should encourage close legislative attention to a key element of the 1998 Education Accountability Act.

Meanwhile, accountability efforts have increased the number of student tests, perhaps to a degree that could be considered counterproductive, the LAC found. Unwarranted duplication wastes state money, takes away from instructional time and could result in test fatigue. Accountability is necessary but the number of state-mandated tests may actually be too much of a good thing.

What the audit didn't uncover was significant as well. Administrators aren't overpaid, as some department critics have contended. Indeed, the LAC urged a salary study aimed at keeping pay competitive for key personnel in public education. And the audit determined there are sufficient management controls over contracts with the department, and efforts to bargain for savings when contracts are negotiated.

To her credit, Education Secretary Inez Tenenbaum already has moved to enact some of the cost-saving recommendations in the audit, for example, reducing some travel and cell phone expenses. Following federal guidelines on lodging and travel could be applied with a welcome economy across state government, as the LAC has repeatedly recommended.

It is encouraging that the LAC didn't find an excessive and wasteful bureaucracy at DOE, as some critics clearly expected.

But the audit findings on the Teacher Certification program and school takeovers deserve continued study. Each holds promise for improving public education, but the value of each should be objectively determined on a continuing basis.

#### OPINION



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Posted on May 30, 2004

## Senate hasn't voted on income tax reduction and may not do so

The S.C. Senate has not been able to bring itself to vote on Gov. Mark Sanford's proposal to lower the state income tax, and it looks as if that vote may not be taken this year.

How can that be when most of the state's senators are on the record as supporting the plan?

Because Democratic senators are filibustering the bill. They are trying to talk it to death. They refuse to end the discussion of the issue and let the Senate take a vote.

They know that if it comes to a vote, the plan will pass. They don't want to give in to the democratic process. They don't want the duly elected representatives of the people to do their duty and vote. They are more intent on getting their way.

So, once again, the Senate has allowed itself to be obstructed by minority rule.

The body needs to change its rules. Many issues were lost this year because the Senate wasted so much time in the filibuster of a bill that would allow primary enforcement of the state's seat belt law.

A few senators opposed the bill and refused to allow a vote on it. The Senate continued to debate the bill. Senators

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love to boast that theirs is the more deliberative of the two bodies, but the debate over the bill degenerated into a discus-

sion on the merits of different types of cheese.

As this nonsense took place, no action was taken on important legislation. Now, a minority of senators is again keeping the majority from voting on a crucial gubernatorial proposal.

There is no excuse for this inaction in the Senate. There is no reason for the democratic process to be thwarted in favor of arcane and obsolete Senate rules.

Senators keep the filibuster rules in place because they never know when they may need to use them. They like the idea that one senator can block legislation and shut down the entire body. They like that power, and they don't want to give it up.

Meanwhile, the state suffers, and democracy is denied.

The Senate should change its rules. Senators should do the job for which they were elected -- vote on proposed legislation.

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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

The State

## Senate action on lobbyists signals retreat from reform

AFTER THE GOVERNOR finished his House-bashing publicity stunt with the squealing, defecating piglets dubbed "Pork" and "Barrel," he might well have trotted the livestock across the lobby to the Senate chamber, where they could have bellied up to a different kind of trough the senators were preparing.

While attention focused on Mr. Sanford's grossly undignified critique of the House's childish veto tantrum, the Senate was quietly approving a measure to let lobbyists line legislators' pockets and let the special interests who employ the lobbyists more easily line their stomachs with food and liquor.

The legislation, which faces a final Senate vote Tuesday before going back to the House, could mark the General Assembly's fastest retreat ever from good-government reform.

The 1991 ethics law, passed after the federal government exposed the free exchange of cash for favors between lobbyists and legislators, wisely prohibits lobbyists from making campaign donations to legislators. But a loophole that was quickly discovered and exploited allows a lobbyist to "unregister" when the General Assembly adjourns for the year — or for an evening, for that matter — make all the \$1,000 donations he wants to the legislators he's been paid to influence, and then re-register before the bell rings on the start of the next legislative day. It was just a year ago that the Legislature finally plugged that loophole, barring campaign contributions for the entire calendar year in which someone is registered as a lobbyist.

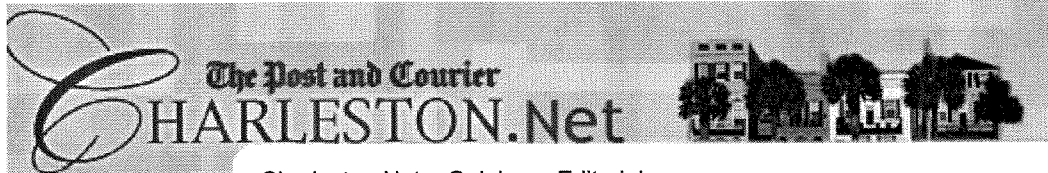
But on Thursday, the Senate voted unanimously to open it back up — in time to make sure the lobbyists will be able to write fat checks for the primary elections nine days from today.

On top of that, the Senate voted to allow a "freshman caucus" to join the list of legislative committees, delegations and caucuses that can hit up special interests for free meals and booze. (Special interests would still be prohibited from wining and dining individual legislators — at least for now.)

Both bad-government measures were attached to a House bill that had minor sins of its own. The original bill makes it more difficult for the public to find out about those free meals and drinks, and it removes a provision that prevented lobbyists from "facilitating" campaign donations; that could make it easier for special interests to tie their campaign donations to specific votes. That was already a bill of dubious value. The Senate's amendments make it a bill that cannot be justified.

If senators care more about serving the public than serving themselves, they will reconsider their action. If they don't, the House should refuse to accept the Senate changes. And if all else fails, Gov. Mark Sanford should waste no time vetoing this measure. One of the few things he has to show for two years in office is last year's long-overdue reform of the state's ethics and campaign finance laws. The last thing he should want to do is oversee the unraveling of those reforms.

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## EDITORIALS The Post and Courier



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Story last updated at 7:10 a.m. Sunday, May 30, 2004

## Quiz lawmakers on reforms

There are dual themes in Gov. Mark Sanford's frustration with the Legislature: too much pork and too little concern over reform. Taking piglets to the Statehouse got him some attention on the pork. No one should forget, however, about the lack of action on such reforms as the completion of state government reorganization, a victim of political back scratching.

Unfortunately, this Legislature refused to even allow the voters to decide whether the governor should round out his Cabinet by appointing rather than electing such state officials as superintendent of education, secretary of state, secretary of agriculture and adjutant general. As the governor pointed out in his veto message, they've also even ignored his call for eliminating taxpayer-funded, contract lobbyists for two consecutive years.

In his first year, the governor issued an order prohibiting his Cabinet heads from hiring contract lobbyists. He noted that legislation was introduced last year to apply that ban to all state agencies but that bill "has languished in the House Judiciary Committee ever since. The result of this inaction for the taxpayer has been noticeable --especially in the area of higher education."

State colleges and universities have long been among those employing lobbyists to look out for their interests in Columbia. According to the governor, the weakness of the state's Commission on Higher Education has allowed the lobbyists to make their cases directly to the lawmakers rather than through the CHE. "Though this budget includes our proposed cuts to agencies and higher education institutions for the amount of their contracts with lobbyists, the additional funding allocated to those same institutions clearly spells out the need for higher education reform," the governor wrote the lawmakers. A number of higher education expansions were approved by the lawmakers this year either without the approval or over the objection of the CHE.

The governor gave this example of the problem in his veto



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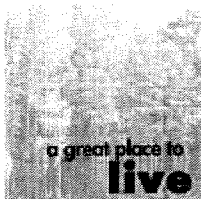
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message: Seven of the eight higher education institutions that employ taxpayer- funded contract lobbyists received a total of \$6.4 million in new money -- an average of more than \$900,000 per school.

But, he said, the 20 schools that had no registered lobbyists had their budgets reduced by an average of \$650,000 per school. The answer, according to the governor, is two- fold: In addition to banning the contract lobbyists, create a higher education commission with some real teeth.

Here's one way to help accomplish that. When a lawmaker seeking re-election asks you for his or her vote, ask how he or she feels about contract lobbyists in state government. That ought to get the conversation started in the right direction.

### OPINION



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## Public needs, deserves full disclosure on doctors

### *State medical board findings must be public*

Published Sunday, May 30th, 2004

The primary mission of the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners is to protect the public.

The board attempted to fulfill that mission Tuesday when it made public a new order to suspend temporarily the medical license of Hilton Head Island cardiologist Dr. James D. Johnston.

The order outlined serious concerns about the doctor, citing alcohol abuse that put the public at risk. It cited an incident on March 16 when Johnston allegedly attempted to treat an emergency room patient while impaired. It also said Johnston has failed to follow through on an extensive alcohol addiction evaluation.

But by late Wednesday afternoon, the 12-page order of temporary suspension disappeared from the public eye. It was removed from the state medical board's Web site.

Johnston resumed his practice at Hilton Head Regional Medical Center amid ironclad secrecy. The secrecy is wrong and it shows a broken system. It suggests that the state's Administrative Law Court -- the same court that thwarted the medical board's efforts to discipline Johnston three years ago -- intervened again to overturn the latest order of temporary suspension. Assuming that's so, the public is being given no clue by the court why the serious allegations were overturned or which of its judges took the action.

Has there been a hearing? Has the doctor been given due process? Has the medical board presented its findings? Have the allegations been dismissed outright? No one will say.

Johnston must be accorded due process. But the public needs to know how he answers the medical board's contention that alcohol addiction renders him "unfit to practice medicine." The public needs to know how Johnston answers the board's concern that he has refused to cooperate and abide by an agreement to undergo "an in depth, intensive evaluation to determine the extent of his abuse of alcohol."

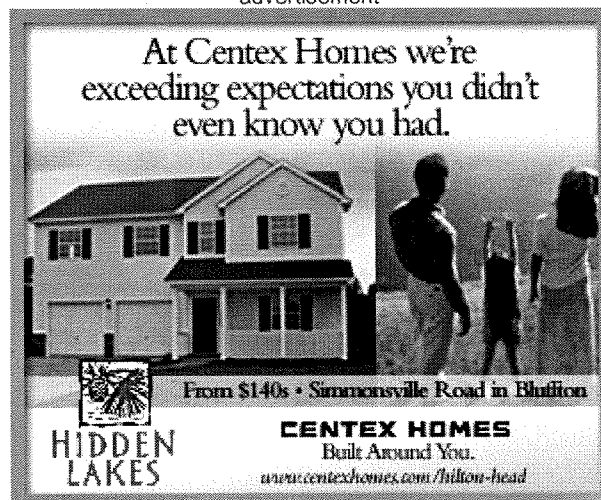
For the board of medical examiners to fulfill its primary mission, the public must know what it is doing. People rely on the medical board to make personal health care decisions. The public depends on the medical board to police those it grants licenses to, and to publicly disclose both its concerns about medical professionals and how those concerns are resolved.

Also, other data banks that inform the public about medical professionals ultimately depend on the state boards of medical examiners for current, accurate information.

It is a farce when the state medical board says one day a doctor is a danger to the public and the next day -- with no explanation -- the public listing on the same doctor says "no disciplinary action taken by the board."

The public needs to know that the medical board has twice ordered Johnston to be evaluated for possible alcohol addiction. The public has a right to know that Hilton Head Regional Medical Center suspended Johnston's privileges this March and then granted him a leave of absence. The public has a right to know that Johnston regained his privileges to practice at the island hospital without complying with state recommendations for the in-depth evaluation.

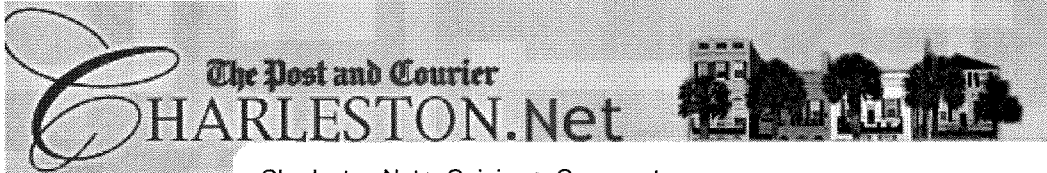
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A system that denies the public's right to know these things -- and the reasoning behind them -- is not protecting the public.

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## OPINION The Post and Courier



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Story last updated at 7:10 a.m. Sunday, May 30, 2004

# Budgetary process needs a statewide perspective

BY MARK SANFORD

Over the last few days, there has been a well-chronicled fuss over budget vetoes. But the basic question all of us should ask is, why?

At the end of the day, for me it has all been about two principles:

1) In a state that constitutionally requires a balanced budget -- and therefore doesn't allow deficit spending -- should we immediately pay off an illegal deficit that by law shouldn't exist when we have the means to do so or put other spending ahead of it? And if we don't, what sort of precedent do we set for a legislative body 50 years from now in adhering to the balanced budget requirement our founding fathers put in place?

2) When is enough enough in spending money we don't have? This so-called "Maybank Money" is \$90 million we hope will materialize, but because there are no guarantees we felt we needed to build in some cushion space if it was going to be paying for core functions of government.

We certainly had other much larger differences. For example, our budget proposed growth in government of 1 percent while this one proposed growing government by 6.6 percent. Our budget incorporated substantial savings from restructuring, this one proposed very little restructuring and spends \$315 million more than is projected to come in on a recurring basis -- which creates an immediate budget hole next year.

But politics is about compromise, so in our vetoes we elected to limit our focus to the two things we thought mattered most. We offered vetoes comprising 1 percent of the entire budget that would have extinguished the remaining unconstitutional \$16 million deficit -- and left a \$20 million cushion in the \$90 million of "Maybank Money" to ensure that agencies like DSS actually



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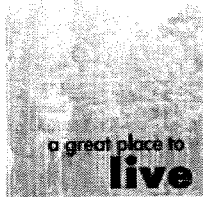
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receive the funds promised. We offered 106 vetoes -- in essence 106 chances to recognize at least a dollar of waste in a \$5.3 billion budget. The House didn't find a single dollar. So the following day I carried a couple of pigs upstairs as a light-hearted way of saying, "Wait a minute, there is plenty of money for 'pork' projects for individual members districts, but no way to carve out any savings to pay off the deficit?"

Trying to change anything in the political process means you're going to lose some fights and we lost on both of these principles. It's time to move on, but the fuss surrounding them raised for many a bigger question -- the belief that these overturned vetoes had less to do with the vetoes themselves than with making a statement about who is in charge of the budget process in South Carolina. Clearly, we recognize that to be the General Assembly, but whether or not the executive branch has a hand in the process is important for all of us to think about because the ultimate measure of any government is what it spends.

In our state the governor's office has not historically had much involvement in the budget. That's been the Legislature's "sandbox." While the legislative body is for the most part composed of very competent people, each member is elected to represent one district -- one part of our state. For over 200 years, governors didn't even produce an executive budget until Carroll Campbell began the process little over 10 years ago, yet the governor's office brings with it a unique statewide perspective that Gov. Campbell believed was key to the budget process. Regardless of how much a representative loves this state, if elected to represent one district and given the choice between something in that district or something better for the state but 100 miles away -- guess which one many believe they are required to pick?

It is precisely for this reason we need the executive branch to nudge and challenge the General Assembly to go just a bit further when dealing with principles as significant as the ones we laid out in our budget vetoes. That's not a crisis -- that's not an offense -- that's something we should celebrate and two great things came out of this whole fuss.

One, there were some heroes in both the House and Senate who stood up for these simple ideas and from little beginnings big things can grow that ultimately begin to change the way things are done in Columbia. If you get the chance, I'd ask you to thank people like Greg Ryberg, Greg Gregory, Harry Stille, Glenn McConnell, Herb Kirsh, or Ben Hagood. Second, sand is always going to fly when you get in someone else's sandbox. For a while it may get messy, but in the end you can build a far better sandcastle with two hands rather than one -- so it also goes I think with South Carolina's bud-geting practices. Time will tell -- in the meantime I plan to keep on digging.

Mark Sanford is governor of South Carolina.

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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

## Beasley's past could haunt him

By LEE BANDY  
Staff Writer

Former Gov. David Beasley will make the runoff for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate as the clear front-runner. But that's no guarantee he'll be the ultimate victor.

Beasley's past could come back to haunt him as it did in his 1998 gubernatorial re-election campaign. He retains some residual negatives from that campaign.

One was his wavering on a statewide lottery.

Another was his flip-flopping on whether to move the Confederate battle flag from the State House dome. That damaged his reputation most seriously. Critics say he failed to lead on the issue while in office.

In his first term as governor, Beasley also fibbed about his athletic prowess, telling an audience of young people in 1995 that he once ran the 100-yard dash in 9.5 seconds in high school. There was no record of anyone at his high school having run that fast.

Primary rival, U.S. Rep. Jim DeMint, threw that one back in Beasley's face at an Upstate GOP event last weekend, suggesting the former governor had a tendency to exaggerate his importance and standing.

During Beasley's re-election campaign, there also was a whispering campaign that he had a relationship with a staffer. Both denied it at a well-covered press conference that succeeded in only breathing new life into the rumor.

Many Republicans today blame Beasley for the party's defeat in 1998. Not only did the GOP lose the governor's office to Democrat Jim Hodges, but it saw its numbers dwindle in the General Assembly and elsewhere.

Exit polls that year showed one in four Republicans didn't trust Beasley. They ended up supporting Hodges.

Today, there is resentment toward Beasley among a number of Republicans who won't forget the 1998 debacle. Many have joined the unofficial ABB — Anybody But Beasley — Club. If he is the nominee, they say they will vote for state Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum, the presumptive Democratic nominee.

Most recent campaign polls show Beasley with a wide lead — as much as two to one — over his nearest GOP primary rivals, DeMint and Charleston real estate developer Thomas Ravenel.

"That's not very promising for those in second place," Francis Marion University political scientist Neal Thigpen said. "That hurts you money-wise. It's not the kind of thing you take to some big-money people and have them empty their pockets for you."

If Ravenel could get enough steam to pass DeMint — a growing possibility — he would be the best equipped to make a race against Beasley, Thigpen said. He has the personal wealth to do it.

There are some who think Beasley peaked when he announced his candidacy in January. His numbers have remained stuck between 35 percent and 43 percent. With nearly universal name identification, experts say it will be very difficult for Beasley to grow his lead from the primary to the runoff.

"Those who don't vote for him in the first round aren't going to vote for him in the runoff," said Don Aiesi, a Furman University analyst.

The primary election will play out as a referendum on Beasley — a scenario usually reserved for an incumbent.

The big questions are: How well will Beasley do in the initial balloting? And, who will be his opponent in the runoff?

Ravenel, the wild card in the race, could prove to be Beasley's toughest Republican rival. He would have not only the momentum from winning second place, but a boatload of money — largely his own — heading into the runoff.

Beasley, meanwhile, would have the fervent party faithful.

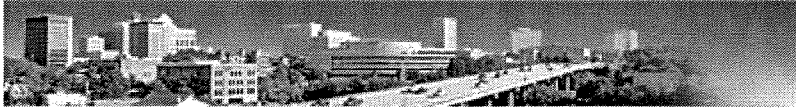
"Who knows?" Thigpen said. "We could have a runoff that might be interesting."

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**4th District candidates struggling for attention**

Posted Sunday, May 30, 2004 - 12:52 am

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The open seat for the Upstate's 4th Congressional District has attracted plenty of candidates, but not much attention.

While the office in question isn't obscure, this particular campaign is.

That there's a campaign under way is not by the candidates' choice.

Competing against a war, a Republican U.S. Senate primary where millions are being spent on TV ads, and a high-profile match for a Greenville County Council seat has relegated the three Republicans and two Democrats to the background.

The less attention the race gets, the greater the advantage for the front-running Republican, Bob Inglis, who held the 4th District seat 1993-99, analysts say.

Having been there before through four primaries and general elections, Inglis has the edge in name identification, money and organization.

**One stands out**

Danielle Vinson, a Furman University political scientist who specializes in the presidency, Congress and the media, said other contests will be the driving force for turnout June 8, "and the one name in the 4th District race they are most likely to recognize is Inglis."

In the absence of a vocal, high-profile campaign, "Name recognition is often reason enough to vote for someone when the voter doesn't know anything else about the

e-mail this story

**Dan Hoover**

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candidates," Vinson said.

As a former incumbent, Inglis has a grass-roots network, "but the other candidates are most likely building them for the first time. He starts ahead of them," she said.

### **Overshadowed race**

Doug Wavle, a state GOP executive committee member from Greenville, assessed the race similarly, while shying away from naming names.

"There are many who would hold to the belief that one candidate is so far ahead it doesn't matter. Folks are sitting back, saying the leader's going to win," he said during last weekend's county party picnic.

"The Senate (primary) race has so overshadowed it, and so does the Scott Case-Hayne Hipp County Council race," Wavle said.

An SUV-load of Republicans considered running, but backed away. Two others actually entered, campaigned, raised money, then dropped out.

Carole Wells, Inglis' last remaining major opponent, disagrees that the quiet nature of the campaign works to Inglis' advantage, saying the low-key nature of the campaign is a plus for her "because it throws in a surprise element."

But Wells, a state Employment Security Commission member and former Spartanburg legislator, has raised only one-twelfth of Inglis' \$410,000.

A third candidate, Greenville retiree Jack Adams, is conducting a mostly front-porch campaign and hasn't topped the \$5,000 mark.

### **Democrats, too**

Greenville's Joe Erwin, the state Democratic Party chairman, said, "All this works to Inglis' advantage, "positioning him to win by default on name ID. It's almost like running against an incumbent."

What it means for the two Democrats, Brandon Brown of Greenville and Andrew Wittman of Taylors, is less clear.

The district is overwhelmingly Republican, neither candidate has shown significant fund-raising capability and there are few Democratic primaries to boost turnout.

Although there is a Democratic U.S. Senate primary, Inez Tenenbaum is heavily favored over a perennial candidate in a contest that isn't likely to stir tremendous interest.

Wittman received just over \$10,000 through May 19, plus another \$5,000 he kicked in, according to federal reports. Brown hasn't breached the \$5,000 filing threshold.

As congressional campaigns go, those are poverty-level figures.

### **No surprise**

To Brown, the Senate contests mark a historic moment for South Carolina, one that drains attention from the 4th District.

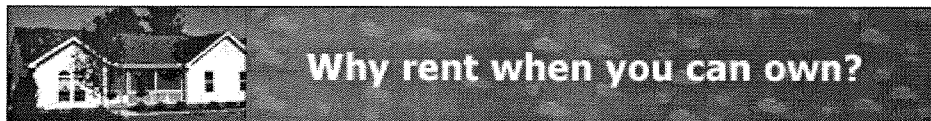
"After losing Sen. Thurmond and now Sen. Ernest Hollings (to retirement), of course I expect a lot of exposure for that nomination. Considering Inez Tenenbaum's success in raising money and getting exposure, it's no surprise."

Wittman says that "most folks have checked out because they think Bob Inglis has already won. I'd like to sneak up on him.

"I hope he doesn't take me seriously. It helps me tremendously that it's under the radar."

As a conservative Democrat, Wittman said, "The primary is as big a fight for me as the general election."

*Dan Hoover's column appears on Sunday. He can be reached at 298-4883 or toll-free at (800) 274-7879, extension 4883, and by fax at (864) 298-4395.*



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Posted on Sun, May. 30, 2004

The State

## Some of our endorsements may surprise you and me both

By BRAD WARTHEN  
Editorial Page Editor

IT'S OVER, FINALLY. On Thursday, exactly seven weeks after our first candidate, legislative hopeful Ashley Cannon, came in for his endorsement interview, we said goodbye to our 53rd and final guest — Republican Mike Reino, who is running in the June 8 primary for the dubious privilege of getting creamed by U.S. Rep. James Clyburn in the fall.

For the last few days, you have seen the fruits of all that sitting and talking, as we have published many of our endorsements in various races for local, state and federal office (read them at <http://www.thestate.com/mld/state/news/opinion/>).

So for those candidates, the suspense is over. They now know whether to boast of our endorsement or go around talking about how they didn't want it anyway. But what they probably don't realize, and what may sound strange to the reader, is that this process is suspenseful for me, too.

The endorsement process can be fairly mystifying from the outside. ("How could you endorse this guy, whom you rejected two years ago? How could you back that one, who disagrees with you on crucial issue X?") Well, sometimes it can be fairly bewildering from the inside as well.

It's not unusual for me to go into an endorsement cycle hoping that in the end, we will endorse candidate A — because I particularly like a proposal he's put forward, or because I just think she's a fine person with a lot to offer and I'd hate to see her lose. But I know from experience to do no more than hope. I can't assume, for a couple of reasons. First, I have to convince my colleagues to go along with me. I have failed to do that at least once this year.

Then there's the bigger problem: me. I find I am surprised, time and time again, by what I learn in endorsement interviews, and how differently I view the candidates when it's over. Part of it is pure mathematics: We ask each candidate a uniform set of questions, each with right and wrong answers from our perspective, and sometimes the candidate I had assumed was hopeless just has better answers than the one I had thought would shine.

Part of it is the general impression you form by spending 45-90 minutes talking with someone in detail about his or her views, background and general attitude with regard to the office being sought and its responsibilities. And it's not just the interview. Sometimes epiphany comes as a result of some other part of the process — our editorial board's discussion afterward, or information that comes to light through other sources.

People just aren't simple. Not even simple people are simple. Each endorsement decision has its own complexities that emerge as we delve. (After years of doing this, I understand less and less how anyone could choose a candidate based on something as simplistic and arbitrary as, say, political party.)

All of which leads me up to the big surprise, for me, of this endorsement cycle. Or perhaps I shouldn't say surprise, since this has happened so many times before. "Disappointment" may say it better. Still, I had really thought this time would be different.

Going into this, we fully intended to send a message to our dysfunctional Legislature that we had had enough of its fecklessness. My colleagues agreed. So we went in determined to reject as many incumbents as possible.

We failed. As determined as we were, when we were presented with the actual, specific choices before us, we could not in good conscience recommend tossing out nearly as many as we would have liked. In the eight contested races we considered in which an incumbent was involved, we could only conclude that two should go: Sen. Jake Knotts and Rep. Larry Koon. And those were easy ones, especially since Mr. Knotts didn't show up for his interview, and Mr. Koon had not one, but two, excellent challengers. Mr. Koon made it even easier because the main reason he ran again was because House Speaker David Wilkins didn't want to lose his vote. South Carolina would be better off if Mr. Wilkins had fewer "yes" men.

So why did we support re-electing the others? I'll answer that by describing the most painful choice we made:

Rick Quinn should have been an easy thumbs-down. As House majority leader, he is a member of the team that has led that body down such unproductive paths. He's one of the main reasons, for instance, that we haven't been able to get a cigarette tax increase. Better yet, his opponent was an energetic reformer who said all sorts of things we wanted to hear. Nathan Ballentine wants to "change the tone of politics" in the State House. Education funding would be his main priority. He didn't seem to understand the need for government restructuring, but he made up for that with his enthusiasm for other reforms.

But there was one thing we couldn't get around. Three of our greatest problems with the Legislature in recent years have been the failure to fund schools adequately, the refusal to reform our tax system and partisanship. And Rick Quinn is the co-author, along with a Democrat, of the first plan we've seen with a chance of actually addressing both school equity and tax reform. The bill has some deep flaws, but it's the most likely vehicle for getting to the kind of debate we need to have. Would a newcomer have a chance of pushing through something like that? Not likely. It would take leadership support. So reluctantly, we endorsed Mr. Quinn — for one more term.

Some choices were easier.

Ted Pitts is an incumbent, but only technically. A challenger himself two years ago, unseating a longtime member of the status quo, he has used his two sessions to build a reputation as someone willing to work across boundaries to make positive change. He's an almost perfect example of just what we need more of in the House.

When Mr. Pitts' challenger, David Spence, came in for his interview, it was the first time I'd seen him in 50 years, since we were both about six months old. His mother and mine were good friends growing up in and around Bennettsville, and our dads were stationed at the Charleston Navy base at the same time. Old home week aside, I was unable to see in him the potential to be nearly as good a representative as Mr. Pitts. He promised to carry on his father's tradition of constituent service, but he didn't have much to say as to how he'd make South Carolina a better place. This was a clear case in which a vote for the incumbent was a vote for change, while the challenger seemed to offer only more of the same.

As you read these and other endorsements, you may agree or disagree. You may be persuaded, or our reasoning may convince you more than ever that you want to vote for the other person. In any case, I hope you find our offerings helpful. And who knows? In reading them, you just may reach a conclusion that surprises you.

Write to Mr. Warthen at P.O. Box 1333, Columbia, S.C. 29202, or [bwarthen@thestate.com](mailto:bwarthen@thestate.com).